

Hellman

Dan sent me an email on 2/2/15 and we had a discussion that evening – he spent the night here to make an early seminar at CISAC the next day.

The first question should be, “What will speak to people? get their attention?” Maybe nothing until there’s an incident – hopefully threats, not use. But still an important question. I think the best way for you to reach people is to tell them something you know as a result of your “insider status” (secrets intrigue people, and get past the “if you knew what we knew” opponents) and that they didn’t know and that surprises them seems like the best approach. Chapter 3, PACOM COMMAND AND CONTROL, seems to do that, and I expect other chapters will as well.

I’d take a different approach to making it apocalyptic, but that’s me. “Killing all life on earth” is likely to “scare them stiff.”

Also, as I noted in my earlier email to Dan, moving from “destroying civilization” to “kill everyone” as the stated consequence is likely to attract criticism which may submerge the larger issues. I think it would be better to be a bit more cautious in those statements. It’s true we can’t rule out extinction of the human race, and possibly even all life on earth, but without doing the experiment, it’s far from certain. Models are subject to error – either way! Similarly, I’d be more cautious about asserting nuclear winter is 100% certain – an issue which comes up later.

Talking in terms of an apocalypse may actually impact people less than talking (as I sometimes do) about coming home tonight and the shower doesn’t work, the electricity is off, the stores have no food, and this is going to last for years. And, by the way, there’s a good chance you’re not alive, nor is any of your immediate family!

Go over “Talking About Nuclear Weapons with the Persuadable Middle.” Moral arguments were not a good message, nor was zero. They found the most effective messages talked about the risk posed by the weapons themselves, not proliferation or possession by any one nation. Here are some excerpts (emphasis in original):

... avoid making the debate around nuclear weapons about us vs. the “scary other” – because that promotes irrational fear and encourages people to embrace a default frame in which we need to hold on to all of the weapons available to us, consider preventive strikes against bad countries that might get nuclear weapons, etc. ...

Peace and security advocates should work to help the public think about nuclear weapons in a new way – **“re-frame” the issue to help people see that it is the existence of the weapons themselves—not who has them—that poses the primary threat to global and national security. The fact that nuclear weapons are a source of risk – not the fact that they are morally wrong—** should be presented as the underlying reason why the issue of nuclear weapons matters.



***Reducing risk should be underscored as the goal of peace and security advocates.*** Reducing the number of—and eventually eliminating—nuclear weapons should be framed as a means to achieve this goal (a means to an end); and advocates should emphasize that there is a process by which we can reduce/eventually eliminate these weapons. ...

***“Getting to zero” should not be presented as the primary focus of advocates;*** the goal, again, is to reduce risks to global stability and national security. ...

When introducing the Risk Reduction Frame, advocates should be focused on the risk posed by nuclear weapons – not just the risk of vulnerable fissile materials (i.e., nuclear terrorism). ... ***when politicians and other opinion leaders evoke serious national security threats like nuclear terrorism, the public starts seeing the entire world as a scary place, full of enemies whose behavior cannot be modified or controlled in any way except through crushing them – a worldview that does not favor advocates’ ultimate goal of eliminating nuclear weapons.*** ...

***Nuclear weapons create risk rather than reducing it.*** ... re-framing nuclear weapons in the public’s mind as a risk rather than an integral part of our security structure, is a long-term goal that cannot be reached by traditional peace and security advocates alone. ... Research has shown that once a listener or reader puts you in a mental box (as a liberal/progressive, in this case), s/he will listen to the rest of what you say with that stereotype in mind. ... traditional peace and security advocates are seen as wanting the U.S. to put principles over safety – an unrealistic, dangerous stance – and are therefore not the best messengers for the community’s goals and objectives (assuming the aim is to go beyond our base and reach the persuadable middle of the public).

Dan uses the wrong units in his 2-2-15-15 *My Aims short form.docx*. It’s percent per year, not absolute percent. That’s important. Even 0.1% per year adds up to almost 10% over the expected lifetime of a child born today. (Search on *What would a “significant” probability be, at a minimum? 1%?*) He gets it right later in that paragraph: *Perhaps not less than, say, 5% over the next fifty years, perhaps higher.*

Discuss what he sees as allowing risk reduction in a year: *And there’s no excuse, no remotely sufficient justification at all, for allowing it to remain that high—or higher than zero-- another year: which is as long as it would take to reduce it drastically. (Although, tragically, for domestic political reasons it is extremely unlikely that measures that could quickly reduce it will be adopted for years to come.)*

I agree it’s possible, absent domestic political pressure and the power of inertia, but we may differ on the actions needed. I see the following as key:

Critically re-examining the assumptions underlying our national security and especially our nuclear posture. Examples:

Nuclear deterrence works – whatever that means – so don't mess with success.

Putin is the one man who can stop the violence in Ukraine (NYT).  
Overlooks Right Sektor, May 2 Odessa fire, etc.

Nuclear diplomacy with North Korea is a waste of time. They just delay, then cheat, then blackmail you.

And perhaps most importantly: The US always does what's best for the world as a whole. We are an altruistic nation with clean hands. Our relations with all nations would benefit from re-examining that assumption, but I'll mention Russia, Iran, and North Korea as prime examples.

During the Cold War: "We have to fight the communists over there (e.g., Vietnam) so we don't have to fight them on our own shores." Today, the same is said about terrorism.

During the Cold War: "Red China and the Soviet Union control Ho Chi Minh (e.g., Nixon's madman alert)." China fought a war with Vietnam in 1979! Today, the same is said about Putin and the rebels in Ukraine. Could we be wrong again?

Moving beyond fear and anger as the basis for most of our national security decisions.



Go over Dan's assertion: "From 1945 to 1965, it was **never** a danger of a Soviet nuclear attack on the US or its allies, either preemptive or surprise. There was no real possibility of that. **From the late '50's on, the real danger to us—and to the whole world—was from a US first-strike against the Soviet Union.**"

Go over Dan's assertion: "But the Soviet capability and readiness for Doomsday destruction, too, was a result of US nuclear policy." Even if that's true, it will ring false to most Americans. We need to be strategic to reach new people!

Maybe mention 2010 NPR when you talk about "*all options are on the table*" with respect to Iran.

I think this is a key point that needs to be made since I believe most Americans think that's what nuclear deterrence means: *The motives/criteria that have been rationalizing the shape and buildup of our strategic forces for sixty years have not been deterrence of nuclear attack on the US.* This is part of what I call "sloppy thinking about nuclear weapons."



Regarding: *these threats have depended for their credibility and effectiveness on an **appearance of madness** in US (and NATO) leaders.* Maybe use the 1995 STRATCOM report which says (emphasis added):

The fact that some elements may appear to be potentially 'out of control' can be beneficial to creating and reinforcing fears and doubts in the minds of an adversary's decision makers. This essential sense of fear is the working force of deterrence. ***That the U.S. may become irrational and vindictive if its vital interests are attacked should be part of the national persona we project to all adversaries.***

Add one word here: The **sole purpose** of US nuclear weapons should be to deter **UNPROVOKED** nuclear attack on the US and its allies.

*Sorry! May NATO chat*

Regarding: *That sole purpose can and should be accomplished with radically lowered numbers of US nuclear weapons, primarily SLBMs.* Maybe reference the 2010 paper by three USAF people (one a Colonel, who was chief, Strategic Plans and Policy Division, Headquarters Air Force) which concluded we only need 311 warheads. (<http://www.au.af.mil/au/ssq/2010/spring/forsythsaltzmanschaub.pdf>)

Regarding: *I want investigations by scientific bodies [like the NAS] with access to classified war-plans or at least to sufficient classified data to determine weapons effects on sunlight and crops/famine, nuclear winter/famine.* How about adding the risk of nuclear deterrence failing – either estimating it or concluding we are using a strategy with unknown risk.

Regarding: *Thus I want to see confirmed authoritatively the reality of the nuclear winter/famine thesis, as related to actual existing war-plans.* Jim Scouras, now at Johns Hopkins APL, formerly Chief Scientist at DTRA's Advanced Systems and Concepts Office, is concerned that DoD, etc. have dropped all studies of nuclear winter. But he'd be much more cautious than you in current statements.

Your ending to the above paragraph (*showing that the danger/likelihood of this hasn't really been changed by reductions in warheads or by the existence of "options" less than all-out*) indicates that you already know what the study will show. Are you open to the fact that some of our assumptions might be wrong? We need to be seeking the truth, not to prove ourselves right even if (especially if!) we are wrong.

Regarding: *The threat of such attacks (any of the options) under any circumstances, including second strike, is **the threat of a suicide-bomber with his finger on a Domsday Machine**,* show him my "man in the TNT vest" drawing.

Regarding: *[American SLBMs] should be cut back drastically, perhaps by 90%, either unilaterally or together,* it might help to mention that President George H. W. Bush made a number of unilateral cuts in our nuclear forces at the end of the Cold War. These were



CA17  
then reciprocated by the Soviet Union. [I'd need to check the details, but I'm sure that's what happened.] Otherwise unilateral action is likely to be seen as dangerous, even mentally unbalanced.

Regarding *In bilateral discussions, urge Russia to join us in this*: Russia will not join us until we stop treating them as children who need to eat their spinach – Strobe Talbott's analogy in his book, *The Russia Hand*:

In the spring of 1993, he [Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev] was desperate to head off even the threat of force against the Serbs. ... (page 76) I had prepared for the encounter by writing out in advance a detailed argument on how it was in Russia's own interest to join us in threatening military retribution against the Serbs since that was the only way to stop their onslaught and prevent a full-scale war in the region. Halfway through my presentation, Kozyrev, with a look of exasperation, cut me off.

"You know," he said, "it's bad enough having you people tell us what you're going to do whether we like it or not. Don't add insult to injury by also telling us that it's in our interests to obey your orders."

Afterward, in the car riding back to the U.S. Embassy, my assistant Toria Nuland [Victoria Nuland, later of "Fuck the EU" fame in a 2014 leaked phone call over Ukraine] could tell I was rattled. "That's what happens when you try to get the Russians to eat their spinach," she said. "The more you tell them it's good for them, the more they gag."

Among those of us working on Russia policy, "administering the spinach treatment" became shorthand for one of our principal activities in the years that followed.

If all that happened were nuclear disarmament, Russia would have to "eat its spinach" even if it was poison. There are prerequisites to nuclear disarmament which need to be dealt with – primarily the list I have starting at the top of page 3.

Regarding *Initiate negotiations among the NWS toward a convention banning nuclear weapons*: I think a NW Convention may be the best first step diplomatically speaking. It delegitimizes NWs without requiring that we immediately get rid of them (think of the Chemical Weapons Convention). Has Dan seen Richard Lennane's Wildfire website (wildfire-v.org)? He proposes that the process start with small, non-nuclear nations, which then would spread as the global conversation about NWs changed. Sounds interesting to me!

The next point (~~Yes, I am saying, give up exclusive or main focus on the goal of a short-term achievement of a total ban to be implemented in the short-run, in favor of a strong pursuit of the posture described above as an interim step toward elimination.~~) seems to say he agrees.

Dan

Regarding *I believe there will never be a ban that has not been preceded by virtually all of the changes aimed at above*: I am convinced there are other prerequisites, which I've already mentioned. In particular, we need to stop administering the "spinach treatment" to Russia and other nations with whom we disagree.



**Dan Ellsberg email of 2/1/15:**

**Should Doomsday Machines Continue to Exist?**

[I just came across a file meant to accompany My Aims version on Jan. 16; I don't know how it got left out of later versions. My Epilogue above partly reflected my memory of writing it, but this is more concise:

1/16/15 8:03 PM

Does the United States **need** the capability to destroy nearly all human life on the planet? (along with all other primates)?

Should the president of the United States (continue to) have the capability to direct the rapid destruction of all human life on the planet?

The “option” to do that is now—and always has been—among the nuclear “options” in the president’s “football” briefcase that accompanies him at all times: automatically presented to the president, for his decision, in a time of intense crisis (or tactical warning—up until now, always false—from electronic and other sensors).

Should that be among the president’s options?

He does have that real capability—and presidents have had it for sixty years (though for half that time, without knowing it)—with high confidence that it would be accomplished, starting within minutes, on the basis of a single order from him for the launching of existing, operational missiles on high alert against pre-chosen targets.

That highly reliable capability has been developed, bought, produced, deployed, “modernized”, and maintained up-to-date over half a century for him and all his predecessors since Eisenhower.

Has a president ever been made aware that that “omnicidal” result is not only possible but highly likely, near-certain, if he were to choose any of the larger attack options, or perhaps for all of them?

Should the president delegate the authority to order that, in case he is physically unable to do so? To how many?

How many now have that authority, in some circumstances? Or, physical capability, if not authority?

Should the president of **Russia** have the option, or capability, to destroy nearly life on earth?

He does, like the president of the US.

Some other national leaders may have it, too, with their much smaller forces, but with less assuredness. If underground testing of warheads were renewed, and France and China acquired multiple warheads for their missiles as a result, they too would probably join the club with the national capability of ending life on earth: the Doomsday Club.

With currently deployed forces, the other nuclear weapons states probably do not now have this full capability to destroy most human and all other primate life.

*Not so. See Bull article*

However, even those two of the nine nuclear weapons with the smallest of these nuclear arsenals (~~aside from North Korea, which may or may not any operational warheads, or at most ten fissile warheads~~)—namely, India and Pakistan—would, in an exchange involving only one hundred A-bomb warheads of Hiroshima size kill some two billion people by starvation, from the effects on global harvests of the smoke lofted from the cities they burned.

Do the presidents of India and Pakistan need to be able to kill two billion people around the world?

That would be the effect (within a year or so, by starvation from failure of harvests due to reduced sunlight from the smoke) of launching their current arsenals according to their current plans to attack opposing command and control and urban-industrial targets.



*Should* they possess that capability, to be used at their discretion? Do they have the right either to threaten or knowingly to bring about such an effect? Should they have operational plans and capabilities to do that,—as they almost certainly do (whether or not they have explicitly calculated that result)—under any circumstances whatever?

Should other nations of the world—all of whom have populations significantly at risk from such an exchange—allow India and Pakistan to have that capability? Is that threat—to the world!—legitimate, legal, moral, tolerable? Is there anything any of them can do about it?

Do the presidents of Russia and of the US **have the right** to be able—physically, legally, organizationally, technically—to destroy civilization and most large life on earth? Knowing—as they can and should know (even if they don't, yet)—that the execution of existing current operational plans in their respective “footballs” (the briefcase containing their strategic nuclear “options” for immediate execution and the authentication codes necessary to order them) would bring about Doomsday?

No one would trust the leaders of Al Qaeda with the capability to destroy one city: nor should they. Should we trust the leaders of Pakistan with ability to trigger an exchange with India that would kill two billion people?

Who should we trust with management of a well-oiled Doomsday Machine?

Russia?

The US?

**Table 1.** Estimated global nuclear weapons inventories, 2014

Russia	8,000*
United States	7,300**
France	300
China	250
Britain	225
Israel	80
Pakistan	100–120
India	90–110
North Korea	<10
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>~16,300</b>

\*Approximately 4,300 of the Russian warheads are operational or in military custody. The remaining 3,700 warheads are thought to be excess warheads awaiting dismantlement.

\*\*Approximately 4,760 of the U.S. warheads are in the military stockpile (about 1,980 deployed); 2,540 retired warheads are awaiting dismantlement.